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AUTHOR Raymond, Nancy
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ABSTRACT

Social, economic, and popular scientific trends converged in the early twentieth century to support the mass popularity of cosmetics. Twentieth-century magazine ads for personal care and beauty products reflected the contemporary belief that "science" was on the verge of being able to cure almost anything, including physical flaws and aging, and conveyed the imperative that "science" was ready to transform cosmetics users' lives if they would only let it. The prevailing themes of the time of individualism, materialism, and egalitarianism had an impact on the national attitude toward beauty and cosmetics. Also, a variety of trends can be ascribed to the growth of the cosmetic industry, such as: (1) the spread of beauty parlors; (2) women's new assertiveness; (3) the growth of the pleasure ethic; and (4) savvy beauty entrepreneurs. Beauty and personal care products industries made extensive use of magazine ads, where cosmetic advertisers enticed their female public with quasi-scientific gadgets and terms. It appears that cosmetic advertising may have both reflected and reinforced (i.e. legitimized) the popular cultural concept of "scientific" progress and improvement. Though the mystique of specialized knowledge certainly did not arise in this era, its aura was used to such advantage by advertisers that the technique has survived to the present day. (Ten figures and 97 notes are included.) (MS)

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COSMETICS ADVERTISING: A LOOK AT THE FOUNDATIONS

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Nancy Raymond
School of Journalism
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

Personal correspondence:
P.O. Box 11724
Eugene, OR 97440
(503)747-0950

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"There are no ugly women, just lazy ones." With these words, Zsa Zsa Gabor summed up the lessons of a half-century of advertising (1). The promise of science and technology, wedded with the wonders of modern cosmetics, guaranteed that all women could -- and therefore should -- be beautiful. The corollary of this imperative was that women who didn't try to enhance their appearance were subject to the guilt-inducing message that "those who ignore their potential have only themselves to blame (2)."

I would like to explore the premise that early 20th-century magazine ads for personal care and beauty products reflected the contemporary belief that "science" was on the verge of being able to cure almost anything, including physical flaws and aging; and that these ads conveyed the imperative that "science" was ready to transform their lives if they would only let it.

Science, and its emissary, the advertising business, promised women the achievement of the ideal, the idea of constant improvement (3). And with the easy availability of personal care and beauty products, cosmetics moved from the realm of the luxury to that of the necessity (4), underscoring the imperative for their use.

I will examine the social, economic and popular scientific trends that converged, in the early twentieth century, to support the popularity of cosmetics; and I will conclude by discussing some of the possible repercussions of this popularity.

For the purposes of this paper, beauty and personal care products will be defined broadly enough to include not only cosmetics but all products which were claimed to

have a transforming impact on beauty. This broader definition will at times encompass devices, foods, and personal hygiene products.

Scientific imagery and much of the burgeoning literature on health at the turn of the century promoted the idea that the body, when functioning well, ran like a well-oiled machine. At the same time, beauty was now being equated with health, and the healthy woman was supposed to look like the picture of physical perfection: "Keep fit and fit in, run like a machine and look like a model. That is the cumulative message of drug and toiletry ads (5)." This mechanistic image of the body supports the assertion that, parallel with machine repair, one can replace malfunctioning or unsatisfactory parts of the body, a clear parallel with the proffered "scientific" transformation of beauty and health.

The scientific mystique used by advertisers, which hit its heyday in the early decades of the 20th century, and which persists strongly in today's advertising, was a reflection of a rich context of thought about health and beauty that had developed over the last century in the U.S. I will outline this context and then move on to examples of advertising of the era, crediting along the way Marshall McLuhan's assertion that "...historians and archaeologists will one day discover that the ads of our times are the richest and most faithful daily reflections that any society ever made of its entire range of activities (6)."

Changing Images of Beauty

Conceptions about beauty and the use of cosmetics have undergone dramatic reversals throughout history. Christian ideology banned the use of cosmetics as

whorish, an attitude echoed by English and American Puritans and Victorians (7). Sophisticated Europeans, however, were more liberal in their attitudes toward personal adornment, and Western European men wore cosmetics along with women until the era of the French Revolution, whereupon men rejected cosmetic display in a gesture called the "Great Masculine Renunciation (8)."

It has been proposed that Americans of the early 19th century began to see the cultivation of beauty as an exclusively female pursuit at the point when the Industrial Revolution demarcated the home/work roles of the female and the male. Magazines of the era echoed the work imagery: "It is woman's business to be beautiful (9)." Such language not only emphasized that woman was expected to approach her beautification in a diligent and professional way; it also clearly implied that her business was not the competitive acquisition of a paid job (an idea echoed in the post-World War II ads depicting women as "household engineers").

Cosmetics, however, were still thought to be the province of the actor and the prostitute until the turn of the century. Sarah Bernhardt may have prodded convention along a bit when she applied her makeup in front of the public, a trick repeated by the Flappers 50 years later (10). By 1900, rouge was accepted enough by the general public to claim ad space in the Sears catalog, and by 1910 U.S. women were using cosmetics extensively (11).

In an ironic aside, a temporary drop in the popularity of cosmetics led to the establishment of emporia devoted exclusively to the cosmetic transformation of women. Apparently in the 1870's women trend-setters renounced the use of

cosmetics, precipitating another decade where makeup was identified with promiscuity. Almost in reaction, hair became a paramount mark of beauty, and the use of elaborate hairstyles and hairpieces spawned the growth of beauty parlors, owing to the great amounts of time needed to arrange the hair (12).

The beautiful physique, as well as the comely head, was undergoing its transformations at the turn of the century. Throughout the 19th century, the ideally proportioned woman was far heavier than today's standard, and by the end of the century newspapers were regularly publishing the generous "ideal measurements" of various famous females (13). This ideal seems to have persisted into the first years of the 20th century, as attested by the article "How to Get Plump" dating from 1908 in Harper's Bazar (contemporary spelling)(14). By 1911, however, as Boorstin remarks, vitamins had been discovered, drastically changing Americans' eating habits (toward more fruits and vegetables) and ushering in the era of the fashionably slim figure (15).

Developments Influencing the "Beauty Culture"

The "beauty culture" of the 20th century was influenced by a multiplicity of political, social, and philosophical trends. It may be useful to begin by noting that medical opinion of the 19th century described women as physically frail beings who, because of their reproductive physiology, were susceptible to nervous strain at the first sign of mental or physical exertion. A gynecological lecture of the time describes the "strange and secret influences which her organs by their nervous constitution ... are capable of exerting, not on the body alone, but on the heart, the mind, and the very soul of women (16)." Thus contemporary medical belief, a forum that has certainly had its

fashions, supported the view that woman's body was not her ally.

Such beliefs were used to discourage women's higher education as well as most pursuits beyond motherhood and wifely duties. Fortunately, educators discovered that the manifold physical illnesses which they expected in their new coeds in the late 19th century never materialized, thanks in part, they believed, to rigorous regimens of physical exercise (17).

By the time of the Progressive era, which flourished between the turn of the century and the first World War, the importance of exercise had not only taken hold, but beauty was considered the mark of the well-exercised, "natural" woman. Reform was the watchword of the day -- as muckrakers pointed out society's flaws -- and health and beauty were now portrayed in the context of "mind over matter." Beauty was available to all, and could be attained merely by a shift in mental attitude: "If you want beauty, think beauty (18)." The famed beauty Lillie Langtry claimed that her study of Buddhism had formed her belief in self-control, which she called "soul beauty (19)." Placing beauty (and success) under the control of attitude more clearly delineated the unbeautiful and the unsuccessful as those who, for obscure reasons (mental laziness?), had chosen not to manifest the desired qualities.

These beliefs paralleled the "power of positive thinking" ethic that permeated lectures on business and personal success at the time (20). And the "natural" ideal of the cosmetic-free woman paralleled the muckrakers' investigations into corruption in the cosmetic and related industries -- inquiries which resulted in the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act, and ultimately in the 1936 Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21). Yet

purveyors of cosmetics and personal care products, as the ads below will show, were careful to explain that their products, far from being unnatural, were aligned with nature's purposes.

One more feature of the Progressive era with implications for the beauty business was the changing mores in sexuality. Victorian notions about sex were under siege, and the 20's saw a startling rise in the incidence of premarital sex among women (22). This era saw the death of the idea that the female was morally superior to the male, a cherished belief in the 19th century. One historian has pointed out that with this change, it was easier for advertisers to portray a woman's appearance as more important than her inner character. The widespread availability, to consumers at all levels, of external means to improve this appearance was fundamental to the growth of the cosmetics industry(23).

The Protestant work ethic may be described as a peripheral influence on attitudes toward health and beauty as well. The "positivist" thinking that gave rise to the "think and grow rich, think and grow beautiful" schools has been described as an outgrowth of the American ideals about the importance of hard work and self-discipline (24). In an ironic parallel, another historian remarks that the Protestant work ethic translated into the wife's industrious attention to the beauty makeover in the face of her inability to get a job (25). This earnest pursuit of allurement instead of paid work makes sense in the context of the shifting female image to be described shortly.

Briefly, one can make a case that the prevailing themes of individualism,

materialism, and egalitarianism of the time had impact on the national attitude toward beauty and cosmetics. Ewen points out that the "enlightened" abandonment of community structure and ritual after the Industrial Revolution led not only to the fragmentation of the community but by extension to the generalization that the self is the highest form of existence (26). This narcissism is ripe for the commercial sell, as "In the commodity lies a newly realized self, the promise of community (27)." It is hard to imagine a product more representative of a "newly realized self" than cosmetics, particularly when the new self holds the promise of maintaining social relationships.

A comment by Ewen on materialism is reminiscent of the scientific and cosmetic promise of improvement: "The mass media and the industries of fashion and design ... have reconciled ... demands for a better life (my emphasis) with the general priorities of corporate capitalism (28)." Fashion and design, like cosmetics, promise instant improvement as well as constantly changing and renewable improvement. And Ewen's hypothesis -- that the consumption of mass products (the chimera of improvement) is the sublimation of working-class discontent -- remains an unproven yet tantalizing idea in the context of cosmetics and female discontent with exclusion from the workforce.

A word on the democracy of cosmetics: Numerous historians have noted that the use of cosmetics spread throughout society in the early 20th century, blurring class lines (29,30,31). And up until the war, ironically, beauty parlor owners were careful to use both feminist and democratic language. A trade journal asserts, "The cult of the

beauty specialist is the cult of decent respect for oneself, of optimistic belief in one's heritage of beauty and a desire to come into one's own (32)." Such language may have been even more politically expedient during a time when it appeared the suffragists were finally about to win the female vote.

Both feminists and beauty experts of the early (pre-1920) 1900's agreed that beauty was a reflection of inner moral purity, as noted earlier. What they agreed on as well was the democratic principle that beauty was available to all women if they would only follow the "right path (33)." Those who exercised their democratic freedom of choice, and made the right choices, were capable of choosing to be beautiful.

A discussion of changing mass consumption patterns in and around the twenties would not be complete without a word about the relative economic prosperity of the twenties. Shannon (34) points out that most Americans lived better than ever before in the twenties. The initial impetus of mass production, with relatively stable price levels, spurred a burst of steady consumption. In addition, healthy industries encouraged the growth of construction and roadbuilding as the automobile took over the imagination of the country. Finally, the desirability of the automobile gave rise to installment buying, a factor pumping even more money into the economy (35). The new ethic of consumption evolved into consumption for pleasure, as evidenced by the spread of amusement parks and dance halls (36). Acknowledging a variety of trends, one historian ascribes the growth of the cosmetic industry in particular to:

a) The spread of beauty parlors

b) Women's new assertiveness

c) The growth of the pleasure ethic (emphasis mine), and

d) Savvy beauty entrepreneurs (37).

A final note linking the pleasure ethic with prosperity describes the social status inherent in beautification routines: "When the wife could spend her day pursuing beauty it indicated leisure and therefore proclaimed her husband's success (38)."

Popular Science and the Beauty Ethic

It is the link between science and technology, on the one hand, and "natural" health and beauty, on the other, to which I wish to turn next. Some of the prevailing popular scientific belief of the early 20th century involved an interesting twist on Darwin's theory of evolution (widely and loosely translated by theorists in other fields). Darwinism was used to argue that, by a natural evolutionary process, all people and particularly all women would eventually be beautiful. The reasoning? That people largely chose the physically attractive for mates, and that soon ugly people would be bred out of existence (39,40). One corollary was that females would become more and more beautiful all the time, and that beauty was therefore the "natural right" of all women (41). The idea even managed to incorporate democratic "melting pot" principles in the language of many beauty writers, who expected a unique American beauty to develop from the vigor of hybrid (i.e. varied) stock (42).

It has been noted that the idea of the "natural" woman was at its height in the years leading up to the war (43). Commercial language of the time reflected not only this fact, but also the idea, noted above, that the healthy body was a scientifically perfect machine: "All beauty and happiness have their foundation in radiant, bubbling

health. When the blood flows sluggishly, the tissues starve, the organs cannot function efficiently, the complexion grows dull and faulty. Your body is like an exquisitely tuned motor. Food is the fuel, etc....(44)." Corset manufacturers of the time picked up on this idea to promote the corset as an aid to health as well as beauty, even as a formative aid in the development of the young body (45).

The period saw a surge in the promotion of exercise regimens, as both health reformists and feminists urged the use of diet, exercise, steam treatments and massage as the route to beauty (46). The concept of the healthy mind in a sound body enjoyed a renaissance during this period, as educators in the late 19th century had recognized that, even for women, physical exercise benefited mental health (47).

The beauty literature of the period reflected the idea that the avoidance of mental and emotional exertion (along with a judicious amount of exercise) would not only prevent wrinkles but would slow the aging process (48).

In fact, the popular faith in the wonders of science was so strong at the time that it was widely claimed science would soon conquer the aging process altogether. A Harper's Bazar beauty expert, Grace Peckham Murray, wrote: "We stand on the verge of such a scientific upheaval that little will remain of the old natural philosophy and chemistry...." Murray went on to suggest that science would conquer the "mystery of aging" and the "secret of beauty itself," calling the business of beauty a "scientific pursuit (49)." The packaging of allure took on, with one stroke, the utility of a business and the respectable mantle of empirical tradition.

What were the ramifications of "scientific technique" for the beauty business?

A look at the beauty parlor is illuminating in this regard. Woman Beautiful reported that the parlors usually used white enamel furniture to simulate a hospital/scientific atmosphere, and that "all windows displayed the sorcery of the word 'scientific.'" Cosmetic technicians of the era were wont to call themselves "beauty specialists," claiming scientific knowledge (including training in physiology and chemistry) about skin rejuvenation. A parallel development was the spread of "quasi-medical doctors" who set up "colleges" and "institutes" to teach the new artifices of "facial restructuring," face peeling, paraffin injections and rudimentary face lifts (50).

Gadgets and machinery supported the identification of the beauty business with science and technology. By 1908 beauty parlors were using an electric vibrator to massage the face (51). Advances in technology brought new techniques for curling and straightening hair as well as new types of cosmetics (52). It is hardly surprising against the background of this scientific revolution that beauty shops claimed patronage thereof would increase longevity (53).

Finally, one can discern the pervasive influence of the new bandwagon in advice books of the latter 19th century, which urged every woman to get the best "scientific and practical" training for her "profession" as housewife (54).

Magazine Ads and the Scientific Imperative to Improve

It may be relevant to begin this section by noting the extent to which magazines had permeated the American culture by the end of the 19th century. While magazines of the early 1800's had catered to an upper-class audience (issues were priced at 25-30 cents, a price affordable to the few rather than the many), by 1900 this profile had

changed. The expansion of the railroads made distribution of reading material cheaper and easier. The invention of the halftone (1890) saved money and added a contemporary look to new magazines. The rotary press made larger print runs possible, reducing cost and increasing readership. Advertisers began to court magazines to reach those expanding reader bases. And finally, the government drastically reduced postal rates for reading material in the late 1800's, further cutting costs for publishers. Munsey's magazine embodied all these cost-saving features in its price reduction to 10 cents in 1893. Circulation went from 40,000 in that year to 500,000 two years later (55) The transition of magazines to mass market vehicles opened another broad channel for advertising copy which would shape, and be shaped by, public tastes.

Changes in the psychology of advertising also helped set the stage for the explosive popularity of cosmetics. In this context, it may be instructive to look at advertisers' attitudes about women, as reflected in ad literature. The historical context of women's image apparently saw a shift from the post-Civil War "virtuous womanhood" (most often a mother) to the idea of the "wife-companion" in the 1920's. The romantic and sexual were emphasized in ads of the latter time; one historian hypothesizes that romance was the new bond that would hold the family together after the disintegration of the old bonds of patriarchy and the family as unit of economic production (56). A social observer in the 1920's pointed out the ramifications of this shift, saying that women must therefore win and re-win their husbands' affection with their personality and attractiveness (57). Ties of tradition and social obligation no longer secured social roles to the same degree.

Enter the female newly susceptible to the cosmetic pitch. Carl Naether, a respected ad man of the time, commented that women were seen as far more easily prejudiced and more suggestible than men -- and that therefore, successful ad pitches would use indirect or subtle suggestion rather than logic (58). One might infer that successful advertising deliberately reflected, in its subtle manipulation and lack of directness, the presumed character of its target.

Psychology was one of the new (and mysterious) sciences bruited in the early 20th century, and advertising literature made broad use of the supposed discoveries about women's secret desires and needs (59). One contemporary beauty ad reflects this pseudo-psychology aptly in its description of woman's "deep-seated urge" to use perfume (60). This urge, of course, was fundamental because, as other ads suggested, the need to attract a man was a central organizing principle in a woman's life

The scientific mystique rounded out advertisers' image of women in yet another way by portraying her as the possessor of expert knowledge about personal care products. Numerous ads for contemporary men's skin products were actually directed at women, addressing them as the experts who "knew" about skin care, and implying that the unfortunate men in their lives needed guidance on this important topic (61).

A Look at Representative Ads

In magazines of the twenties, beauty ads everywhere held out the promise of youth and health. Ad pictures in this era showed the new image of the slim, beautiful young woman as opposed to the earlier image of the mother (62). Modess ads touted female America's "eagerness for youth (63)." Now, more than ever, age meant "the end

of allure" -- ergo the great appeal of science's promise to reverse the aging process (64). Even Quaker Oats got into the act by promising that their product "puts off old age (see fig. 1)(65)." The image of a svelte young woman holding aloft the mask of a crone is an early example of a later popular image: that of a woman able to take her face off and put it back on. This point gathers importance in later ads (see below) showing woman as a split self.

Cosmetic advertisers also enticed their female public with quasi-scientific gadgets and terms. A face-powder ad of the twenties boldly offered readers a "contract" that their powder was guaranteed to be "lectro-static (the author here goes on to query, 'How many scientists could have defined 'lectro-static'?)(66)." Another "beauty secret" powder hints at centuries of research and still another at its "youthifying" formulas (67).

A lengthy text on shampoo described the "free alkali" that was so damaging in ordinary soaps, touting their brand of "Mulsified" shampoo, that, like "lectro-static," must have perplexed scientific lexicologists (see fig. 2)(68). At the same time, the ad declares that "your hair tells the world what you are," reinforcing the notion that a woman's persona is defined by her external (and malleable) attributes. The "New Life Vibrator" (1913) promised to "reconstruct your entire body by causing a proper flow of blood" and to "make a haggard face look younger (see fig. 3)(69)." These ads shared a common premise that science (not identified as artifice) could assist and improve upon nature.

Listerine, a product which changed its pitch from health to personal

attractiveness, provides a potent example of the strength of "scientific" terminology. While early ads promoted the product as a "safe antiseptic," starting in the early twenties the advertisers borrowed the term "halitosis" and warned of the consequent loneliness resulting from social failure (see figs. 4 and 5)(70, 71). Sales skyrocketed from 115,000 sold per year in 1921 to 4 million in 1927 (72). The scientific dragon, halitosis, is offered as the mythical curse upon otherwise attractive young women, and its slaying promises a transformation which will bring marriage and children.

Lysol, which (rather frighteningly) was promoted as a feminine douche, made sundry health and beauty claims in two ads from 1925 and 1926. In the first, the ad defines "today's standard of the female" in three words -- health, youth and daintiness -- and goes on to claim that female immaculacy can be threatened by fatigue, a situation which can be remedied by use of the Lysol douche (73). The second ad reveals that the secret of "youthfulness" lies in preventing female illnesses, another job for Lysol (see fig. 6)(74). Citing expert medical support, both ads imply that women can resist the ravages of age by preventing bacterial infection.

In the gadget department, the Vestro Bust Developer, put out by the Aurum Medicine Co., promised six inches of bust enlargement to the user and offered to send a "beauty book" complete with real-life pictures as well as testimonials from physicians and chemists (see fig. 7)(75). The scientific experts, it is claimed, will reassure the skeptical that complete transformation is achieved, no matter how flat the chest.

Resinol soap, "prescribed by physicians for over twenty years," allowed "nature" to help the skin (see fig. 8)(76). Toothpaste advertisers warned of "acid mouth (77)."

And Fleischmann's Yeast, later on, claimed to clear up pimples by removing "waste poisons" in the blood (see fig. 9)(78). All three ads testify to "nature's" tendency to erode the body, perhaps explaining why "nature" was in need of assistance. Regular use of Resinol "helps *nature* (their italics) give to the skin and hair that beauty of perfect health which it is impossible to imitate." The use of a scientific-sounding compound here is expertly paired with the promise that nature would provide one's rightful beauty if only one would let it.

Discussion

The above are only a few of thousands of examples. As is well-known, the scientific angle has been used to sell much more than just cosmetics, and the pitch is successful enough to persist today. Yet the beauty and personal care products industries made extensive and effective use of the promise of science, riding the crest of the public's newfound faith in scientific progress. By 1931, ads for cosmetics surpassed in number those for food, for the first time, in the pages of the benchmark Ladies' Home Journal (79). By 1933, it was noted that the total national bill for face lifts, massages, hair treatments and cosmetics was over one trillion, more than the government spent on the Navy (80).

What are the physical, social, and psychological ramifications of cosmetic use? With the acknowledgment that this is an enormous question on which I will pause only briefly, I would like to outline a few of the sequelae.

Advertising hype is an easy dog to kick, but the history of beauty ad claims re. science and health exposes the reasons for increasing governmental surveillance and

protection in this field. An advertising historian remarks: "The history of this type of advertisement from the most outlandish claims of the patent medicines a century ago to the more cautious, government-supervised ones of today can tell us something about the interaction of advertising and human nature. It also discloses a great deal about the depth of American medical ignorance and gullibility as well as the reasons behind the increased activity of regulatory agencies (81)." It may be difficult today to imagine a public gullible enough to believe that the "New Life Vibrator" cured rheumatism and deafness in addition to staving off old age. Yet at the turn of the century "science" was a golden calf expected to reveal the cures to all ills. It is not surprising in this context that "science" was believed capable of transforming all women into the "natural" beauties they had a right to be.

It is interesting to note that in the wake of ad claims in the twenties, the American Medical Association felt compelled to make a statement that toiletries had no health-giving properties (82). Furthermore, the Life Extension Institute warned at the time that cosmetic use could pose serious dangers by masking underlying health problems such as anemia, infection or malnutrition (83).

Ewen comments that the widespread use of the corset, a beauty device indispensable to attainment of the ideal measurements noted above, led commonly to shortness of breath, paleness and fainting spells -- and in fact spawned a panoply of female complaints that encouraged the appearance and spread of patent medicines (84).

I am particularly intrigued with the psychological impact of cosmetic ads and usage, a subject harder to delineate but yielding some interesting commentary. Beauty

ads are particularly potent (and, I believe, harmful) in that they present an ideal which may appear to be reality, forever creating a sense of conflict in those who accept the implicit premises. Educator Jean Kilbourne draws our attention, in her film "Still Killing Us Softly," to "the impossible cheekbones, the skin virtually without pores" that are held up to today's woman as the unattainable yet standard index of beauty. One psychotherapist-author describes ads as a form of "mythical discourse" that predisposes the viewer to "accept the message as truth rather than construct. In this way they do far more than just sell the product: They also sell social standards, defining and reinforcing attitudes about beauty (85)."

It is in these messages about the self and how others see it that I think the most danger lies. The twenties, with their confluence of social changes, saw the first heavy emphasis on pictured women as being split into self and image. Ewen indicates that a high proportion of ads in the twenties showed women looking in mirrors, and that even kitchen furnishings featured the centrality of the mirror in the life of the housewife (86). One implicit message here was that woman was split into the private and public, or internal and external, self; moreover, it was critical to keep checking the flawlessness of the external self, which gained new prominence, as we have seen, with the decline of woman's moral superiority.

Another media observer adds that "photographic ideologies convince us we can be both self and other (87)," i.e. that the pictured ad showing a woman gazing at herself in the mirror shows the reader that we can see ourselves as others see us(see fig.*10* and text). The consumer, who sees a face resembling her mirror image, may assume that

she is seeing exactly how she will look if she buys the advertised product: "It is implied that we can recreate a unity with our appropriated image; our face is always Other in the mirror, yet is ours, so why should not these faces become 'ours'?(88)."

Writers on femininity have noted that cosmetic ads, for all their appeal to women's wish for beauty, tie into insecurity more than vanity: "Cosmetics ... are proof (of) an abiding belief that the face underneath is insufficient unto itself (89)."

Such ads must be all the more potent when they reflect the prevailing mythology on which little girls were raised. A psychoanalytical profile of the story of "Cinderella" follows her progress from the state of being ignored, hard at work in her clogs, to her fulfilled dream upon fitting of the glass slipper. The author notes that "little girls learn from Cinderella that cosmetic transformation is the key to love and attention (90)." Echoing the fairy tale motif, another writer concludes that women are getting the message that "the beauty is the beast": "Every ad for bras tells women that her breasts need lifting ... every ad for cosmetics that her skin is too dry, too pale, or too ruddy, or her lips are not bright enough....(91)"

It is possible that scientific and health claims in beauty ads of the early twentieth century may have in fact promoted physical, social and emotional ills. It is difficult to prove, but I suspect that these ads may have inflicted more damage psychologically than they did physically, and I believe the sociological impact persists among current generations of American women.

Two themes of this advertising -- the idea of "fixing" one's health and physiognomy, and that of molding a new, improved self with the aid of the latest

technological developments, interest me in this regard, in that both involve a rejection of self and a preoccupation with perceived public demand. The self, like a mass commodity, must be constantly "improved" to be successfully marketed. The Listerine ad that whispers "even your closest friends won't tell you" reinforces the premise that one must defensively transform oneself to be acceptable. An adman comments on the evolution of the first theme: "Styles, emphases, medical terms, even the diseases change, but the real underlying anxieties, the free-floating hypochondria, the desperate need to be converted from 'before' to 'after,' to find 'instant relief,' have troubled the American body and soul from St. X 1860 to ... Excedrin....(92)."

The second theme, that of creating a new self, is reflected in more than just the ads of the era. One historian describes the rise of the sorority on college campuses, noting it differed from previous campus groups in that it was no longer democratic, and that far from aiming at any reformist objectives, it focused on "molding a winning personality (93)."

The mechanistic model of science's ability to fix female shortcomings has proved successful enough to persist through today's ads: "Experts in lab coats offer her computerized analysis of hair follicles, acupressure and ultraviolet treatments, skin vacuuming and collagen protein masques. The cures are certainly contemporary, but the nature of the disease does not change (94)." The disease, ironically, is the inherent insufficiency and deterioration of one's natural endowments. Thus "nature," portrayed as the quintessential beautifier with the assistance of science, is depicted covertly as the great destroyer.

Cosmetic sales (and ad revenues) are booming today. What is the meaning of this? If Charles Revson spoke the truth ("In the factory we make cosmetics, in the store we sell hope"), is it getting easier to sell hope? We have a more educated population today, and a network of regulatory agencies in place to protect the consumer. But were female consumers well-enough protected if, as Ewen asserts, they began in the early twenties to look at themselves "as things to be created competitively -- sculpted with the aid of cosmetics (95)"?

Schudson would argue that ads are not responsible for the social changes they may parallel. He states that admakers are conservative, "venturing to challenge established ways in the population only when evidence of new market patterns was in plain view (96)." I do not dispute his hypothesis, as I cannot find any clear documentation to the contrary. However, I would like to propose, in the face of multiple tangled influences on consumer buying and self-image, that we follow Huxley's advice that children should be taught from an early age to dissociate advertising from the product (97). In this way, we may have a chance of educating future generations of women toward critical evaluation of beauty products rather than unthinking acceptance of an advertisement's latent message.

To conclude, it appears from this analysis that cosmetic advertising may have both reflected and reinforced (i.e. legitimized) the popular cultural concept of "scientific" progress and improvement. Though the mystique of specialized knowledge certainly did not arise in the twenties, its aura was used to such advantage by advertisers that the technique has survived, like Darwin's fittest, to the present day.

One might argue that the ads in question have promoted a shallow and misleading conception of scientific inquiry, and that correspondingly they have fostered a gullible and malleable consumer public. Yet in any discussion of causality one must acknowledge the hoary chicken-and-egg dilemma: It may be truer to assert that scientific-hype ads succeeded due to the abiding and primitive wish for alchemy, the easy answer, the magical solution. Who is to say? And who is to say authoritatively what impact beauty ads have had on the American female psyche? Bereft of social feedback (even her closest friends won't tell her), today's woman may have to ask the answer of the mirror, mirror on the wall.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Fig. 1 →

It Puts Off Old Age
by nourishing the entire system.
Quaker Oats makes your blood tingle; nerves strong and steady; brain clear and active; muscles powerful. It makes flesh rather than fat, but enough fat for reserve force.
It builds children up symmetrically into brainy and robust men and women.
You can work on
Quaker Oats
It stays by you.
At all grocers in 2 lb. Packages only.

Quaker Oats cereal. Ad. 1902. Quaker Oats Company

acing. Poster. John Hassall. 1908.
Eastern Railway

Pettijohn's Breakfast Food
ALL THE WHEAT BUT THE OVERCOAT
That satisfied—well-fed feeling.
There's a satisfied—well-fed feeling after a breakfast of delicious Pettijohn's. It satisfies that natural craving for wholesome food. Pettijohn's is a rich full-flaked wheat food, not an illogical granular or powdered wheat that cooks into a tasteless, starchy mass. Pettijohn's is full-flaked. It never deceives.

Pettijohn's Breakfast Food. Ad. Paul E. Derrick Advertising. c. 1905. The American Cereal Co

Fig. 2

Will Your Hair Stand Close Inspection?

Is it soft and silky, bright and fresh-looking full of life and lustre

YOUR hair, more than anything else, makes or spoils your whole appearance.

It tells the world what you are.

Wear your hair becomingly; always have it beautifully clean and well kept, and it will add more than anything else to your attractiveness and charm.

Beautiful hair is not a matter of luck. You, too, can have beautiful hair.

Beautiful hair depends almost entirely upon the way you shampoo it. Proper shampooing is what brings out all the real life and lustre, all the natural wave and color and makes it soft, fresh and luxuriant.

When your hair is dry, dull and heavy, lifeless, stiff and gummy, and the strands cling together, and it feels harsh and disagreeable to the touch, it is because your hair has not been shampooed properly.

When your hair has been shampooed properly, and is thoroughly clean, it will be glossy, smooth and bright, delightfully fresh-looking, soft and silky.

While your hair must have frequent and regular washing to keep it beautiful, it cannot stand the harsh effect of ordinary soaps. The free alkali in ordinary soaps soon dries the scalp, makes the hair brittle and ruins it.

That is why discriminating women, everywhere, now use Mulsified cocoanut oil shampoo. This clear, pure and entirely greaseless product brings out all the real beauty of the hair and cannot possibly injure. It does not dry the scalp or make the hair brittle, no matter how often you use it. If you want to see how really beautiful you can make your hair look, just follow this simple method.

A Simple, Easy Method

FIRST, wet the hair and scalp in clear warm water. Then apply a little Mulsified cocoanut oil shampoo, rubbing it in thoroughly all over the scalp, and throughout the entire length, down to the ends of the hair.

Two or three teaspoonfuls will make an abundance of rich, creamy lather. This should be rubbed in thoroughly and briskly with the finger tips, so as to loosen the dandruff and small particles of dust and dirt that stick to the scalp.

After rubbing in the rich, creamy Mulsified lather, rinse the hair and scalp thoroughly—always using clear, fresh, warm water. Then use another application of Mulsified, again working up a lather and rubbing it in briskly as before.

You will notice the difference in your hair even before it is dry, for it will be soft and silky in the water.

Rinse the Hair Thoroughly

THIS is very important. After the final washing, the hair and scalp should be rinsed in at least two changes of good warm water. When you have rinsed the hair thoroughly, wring it as dry as you can, and finish by rubbing it with a towel, shaking it and fluffing it until it is dry. Then give it a good brushing.

After a Mulsified shampoo you will find your hair will dry quickly and evenly and have the appearance of being much thicker and heavier than it really is.

If you want to always be remembered for your beautiful, well-kept hair, make it a rule to set a certain day each week for a Mulsified cocoanut oil shampoo. This regular weekly shampooing will keep the scalp soft and the hair fine and silky, bright, fresh looking and fluffy, wavy and easy to manage—and it will be noticed and admired by everyone.

You can get Mulsified cocoanut oil shampoo at any drug store or toilet goods counter, anywhere in the world. A 4-ounce bottle should last for months.

Splendid for children —Fine for men.

Mulsified
Cocoanut Oil Shampoo

Fig. 3 →

Beauty for You

Electric Massage

Be your own beauty masseuse. Give yourself the true charm of healthy beauty in the possession of a fresh, smooth, rosy skin, sparkling eyes and a luxuriant head of lustrous hair. Know the joys and powers of an active mind and a sound body. Science has placed health, vigor and attractiveness within your reach in the perfection of the wonderful Home Electric Massage Battery. The magic power of this achievement in electrical science is in its refreshing and recreating radiance of faradic electricity. Faradism is the great method employed by the foremost beauty specialists. Test the marvelous powers of the Home Electric Massage Battery on 10 days free trial.

Makes Hair Luxuriant

The electric brush of the Home Electric will stimulate the scalp to the perfect performance of its functions. It will restore the scalp to a healthy condition, enliven the hair and make it more lustrous, silky and abundant. Every woman should have a Home Electric to enrich the glory of her hair. Every man should have one to prevent loss of hair and premature baldness.

Marvelous Aid to Health

Your physician will tell you that faradic electricity as supplied by the Home Electric Massage Battery is a marvelous aid to the general health in many ways. It gives instant relief to headaches, neuralgia, rheumatism, backache, lumbago, scalp disease, falling hair, sore feet, tired feeling, nervousness, sleeplessness, paralysis and other nerve ailments

Home Electric Massage Battery

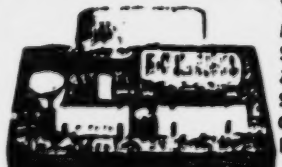
The newest, latest and most convenient scientific application of faradic energy. Complete in itself. Always ready for instant use. No electric light connections are needed in the operation of this remarkable achievement in electric science. It is so simple that a child can use it with perfect results. Every home should get a Home Electric Massage Battery at the amazingly low price now open for a limited time.

Free Trial

Use the Home Electric Massage Battery for 10 days to prove to you that it is worth more to you every week than the special low price for it now. Your money back if you are not more than delighted with its marvelous powers for health and beauty. Take advantage of this great opportunity to secure all the benefits of faradism at a price you can easily afford. Send coupon today.

Massage Book Free

Write for our free illustrated booklet on the benefits of faradism to beauty and health. It is postpaid free to you together with our very special low price on the Home Electric Massage Battery and full particulars of free trial offer. Send today.



Western Merchandise and Supply Co., 326 W. Madison Street, Chicago, Ills.

Send Free Coupon

The special small price for the complete Home Electric outfit is within the reach of every man and woman. Send coupon today and get a copy of the Massage Booklet FREE. Send today.

Massage Book Coupon

Western Merchandise and Supply Co.,
326 W. Madison St., Chicago, Illinois

Gentlemen:—Without any obligation to me please send me free copy of your massage booklet and special price and all particulars of 10 days free trial on the Home Electric Massage Battery.

Name _____

Address _____

What Would You Give FOR A PERFECT HEALTHY BODY

WOULD you spend 10 minutes a day using this wonderful instrument to obtain a perfect, healthy body? The delightful, pleasing touch of NEW LIFE VIBRATOR sends a thrill of energy and vigor rushing through your veins. When you apply it to your body you instantly feel the soothing, invigorating, vitalising effects of increased blood circulation and transform your entire being into one that glows with health. Use the

NEW LIFE VIBRATOR

and you will feel Strength, Energy, Vigor, and increased vitality the instant it starts the free flowing circulation of blood and distributes the strength and building power of the food you eat.

RHEUMATISM in practically every case, no matter how severe, is instantly relieved with the NEW LIFE VIBRATOR. We guarantee this and if after a three day trial, you feel we have failed, you may return us the instrument, as provided in our written guarantee, and we will return your money cheerfully.

DEAFNESS—The ear presents a perfect labyrinth of tiny organs each of which demands its quota of perfect blood supply. You who suffer from defective hearing or even absolute deafness, will find that a conscientious use of the NEW LIFE VIBRATOR will stimulate the stagnant flow of blood and transform your defective ear drums into useful organs.

INDIGESTION even in chronic cases yields almost instantly to the wonderful effects of the NEW LIFE VIBRATOR. Why suffer from this curse of humanity when we guarantee immediate relief or return your money in exact accordance with our written guarantee that goes to every purchaser.

Nature is the greatest of all physicians; do not use drugs but aid nature by stimulating your worn tissues with the NEW LIFE VIBRATOR; reconstruct your entire body by causing a proper flow of blood and you will see a weak, unshapely arm or limb transform itself into a rounded member of beauty and health; a haggard face look younger and above all you will

RENEW AND ENERGIZE YOUR ENTIRE BODY

A poor circulation causes weakness, because you eat strength-giving foods without distributing their blood-building qualities. THE NEW LIFE VIBRATOR instantly helps nature in a distribution of all the food values and the pure blood of the body.

The leading physicians of America recognize the NEW LIFE VIBRATOR as a scientific means of quickly correcting nature's irregularities.

INTERESTING HEALTH BOOK FREE

Write for a copy of our free booklet, which illustrates with actual life photographs just what this wonderful vibrator will do. Remember the book is free, and is yours for the asking.

AGENTS WHO DESIRE A PERMANENT INCOME

will find the NEW LIFE VIBRATOR a seller of such remarkable rapidity that no energetic man or woman can fail to make it a source of permanent income. Everyone is interested in his or her health and a simple five minutes demonstration of the NEW LIFE VIBRATOR convinces the most sceptical. We still have open territories waiting for some live agent to come along and reap a big harvest of unusual profits.

Write for agents' proposition, it will show you a way to a permanent income of a size that will astonish you. Territories going fast, so drop us a post card today.

HAMILTON-BEACH MFG. COMPANY

104 A Street — Racine, Wisconsin

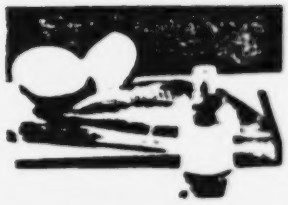
What she *really* wanted was Children

I

Before any social engagement

The ideal deodorant

Does not injure teeth



the safe, pleasant deodorant

LISTERINE ENDS HALITOSIS

1931

Fig. 4

23

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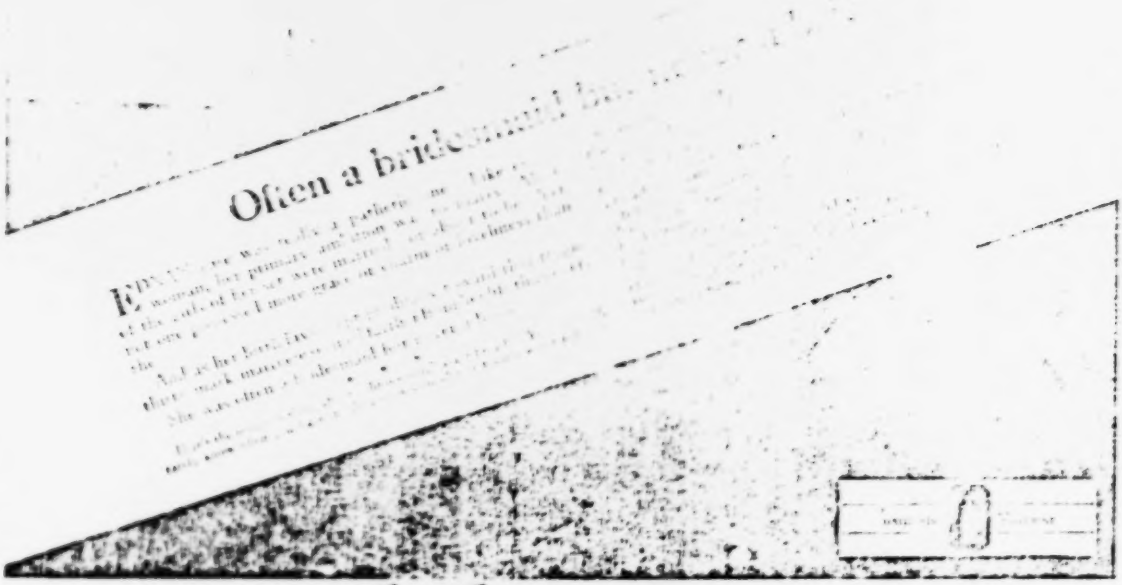
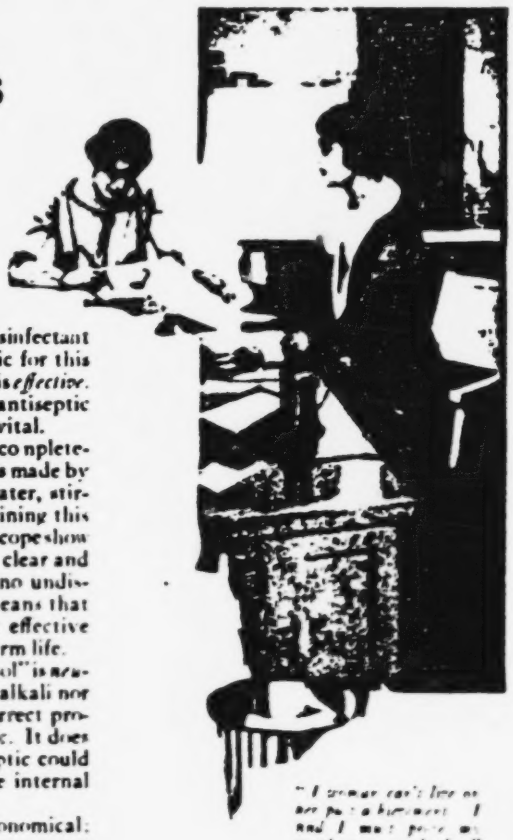


Fig. 5

The woman who does a man's work

She must prove her worth every day. She must keep young, alert, responsive. There can be no let-up



"A woman can't live on her past achievement. She must prove her worth every single day," says a noted authority on women.

THE modern woman finds herself frequently called upon to do a "man's work."

There can be no shirking in her busy life. She must withstand the same strain on her nerves—the same steady grind, hour after hour and day after day—that a man's work requires.

She cannot give way to the vagaries and nerves and weakness so long considered characteristic of the "weaker sex." For her competition is not alone with men—but with her own healthy, eager sisters.

The secret of youthfulness

WHETHER in business, the arts, the home or in society—the modern woman must *keep* young. The real secret of keeping young lies in preventing the usual feminine illnesses. Every such illness weakens the system; and the woman of today cannot afford simply to *appear* young. Her whole system must be responsive, awake, keen.

Most typically feminine illnesses can be prevented. A well-known New York physician, chief gynecologist of one of the large hospitals, says, "Most of these illnesses are the result of bacterial infections." For this reason, physicians are recommending regular feminine hygiene as a necessary preventive measure. And "Lysol" Disinfectant is the accepted antiseptic for this purpose. It is *safe* and it is *effective*. It insures the complete antiseptic cleanliness which is so vital.

"Lysol" Disinfectant is completely soluble in water. Tests made by pouring "Lysol" into water, stirring well and then examining this solution under the microscope show that every single drop is clear and transparent—there are no undissolved globules. This means that "Lysol" is 100 per cent effective in destroying harmful germ life.

At the same time, "Lysol" is *neutral*. It contains no free alkali nor free acid. Diluted in correct proportions, it is non-caustic. It does not irritate. No antiseptic could be safer for the delicate internal tissues.

And "Lysol" is economical; one-half teaspoonful to one quart of water is all that is required to make the proper antiseptic solution for feminine hygiene.

Send for Booklet

CORRECT, vital facts about feminine hygiene are included in a new booklet, which gives complete information and directions for the many personal and household uses of "Lysol" Disinfectant. Every woman should know and follow the rules of personal hygiene contained in this booklet. Mail coupon for free copy.

Manufactured only by LYSOL, INC., 635 GREENWICH ST., NEW YORK CITY

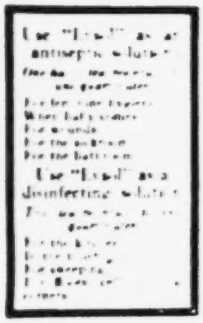
Sole Distributors: LEHN & FINK, INC., NEW YORK

Canadian Agents: Harold F. Ritchie & Co., Limited, 10 McCaul St., Toronto

Complete directions for use are on every package. The genuine "Lysol" Disinfectant is put up only in brown glass bottles bearing the U. S. and Dr. owners each bottle is packed in a yellow carton. The 1 ounce bottle is a regular size in a special non-breakable package for traveling. Insist on obtaining genuine "Lysol" Disinfectant. Sold by all druggists.

Lysol Disinfectant

The ideal personal antiseptic



Use "Lysol" as an antiseptic solution
For the mouth and throat
For the nose
For baby's bath
For wounds
For the bathroom
For the bedroom
For the bath room
Use "Lysol" as a disinfecting solution
For the kitchen
For the garbage pail
For the sick room

SIGN AND MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY

LEHN & FINK, INC.
Dept. B-2 635 Greenwich St. New York, N.Y.
Please send me, without charge, your booklet which gives complete information and directions for the many personal and household uses of "Lysol" Disinfectant.

Name

Address

1926

Fig 6 31

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Makes Women Beautiful.

Marvelous development accomplished by the new and wonderful "Vestro" method of enlarging the Female Bust. Flat-chested and unattractive women are quickly developed into commanding figures that excite wonderment and admiration.—A new and surprisingly effective home treatment has been discovered that enlarges the female bust at least six inches. Women who are not lacking in this respect will not be particularly interested, but to those who by some unfortunate circumstance of health or occupation are deficient in this development will be very much fascinated by the peculiar prominence acquired by the treatment. It is called "Vestro" and is controlled by the well known Aurum Medicine Co.

There is no doubt about the marvelous power of this new treatment to develope the bust to a gratifying extent. Any lady who wishes to know more about Vestro should send her name and address to the Aurum Medicine Co. They will send free, in plain sealed envelope by mail a new "beauty book" they have just prepared, also photographs from life showing the actual development induced and a great number of testimonials from physicians, chemists and prominent ladies all commending the wonderful and remarkable power of Vestro to enlarge the bust no matter how flat the chest may be. Do not fail to write at once. The beauty book and portraits will delight you. All you need do is to send name and address and a two cent stamp to pay postage. All correspondence strictly confidential. Address **AURUM MEDICINE CO.**, Dept. KE, 65 State St., Chicago.

19:

Early bust developers refrained from mentioning breasts (see p. 281 for a modern version). Like most bust-enlargers, this one probably "worked" by building up pectoral muscles. In 1973 Psychology Today *polled 62,000 readers on their "Body Image" and discovered that 26 percent of the women responding were "dissatisfied" with their breasts.*

Fig. 7 32

The girl with the clear skin wins

Many an otherwise attractive girl is a social failure because of a poor complexion. If your skin is not fresh, smooth and healthy, or has suffered from an unwise use of cosmetics, see if the daily use of Resinol Soap will not greatly improve it.

Resinol Soap is not only unusually cleansing and softening, but its regular use helps nature give to the skin and hair that beauty of perfect health which it is impossible to imitate. Tendency to pimples is lessened, redness and roughness disappear, and in a very short time the complexion usually becomes clear, fresh and velvety.

The soothing, restoring influence that makes this possible is the *Resinol* which this soap contains and which physicians have prescribed for over twenty years, in Resinol Ointment, for skin and scalp troubles.

This same gentle medication, together with its freedom from harsh, irritating alkali, adapts Resinol Soap admirably to the care of the hair and of a baby's delicate skin. If the skin is in really bad condition through neglect or improper treatment Resinol Soap should at first be aided by a little Resinol Ointment.

Resinol Soap is sold by druggists and dealers in toilet goods generally. In trial-size cake, write to Dept. 6-K, Resinol, Baltimore, Md.

Resinol Soap

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Fig. 8 33

1916

DO WE HAVE TO ASK PAUL— HE LOOKS SO TERRIBLE
THE GIRLS WERE GIVING PAUL THE "GO-BY" UNTIL—
WE REALLY OUGHT TO HAVE ASKED PAUL TO COME — BUT —
I KNOW — HE'S GOT SUCH AN AWFUL LOT OF PICKIES YOU SORT OF DON'T WANT TO SEE HIM —
OH, GOODY — HERE'S PAUL — PAUL, CAN WE FISH WITH YOU?
PAUL WHY DON'T YOU GO OUT IN THE BOAT?
OH — I DUNNO. WASN'T ROOM ENOUGH FOR ME, I GUESS
YES — AND WHEN SHE SAID YOU HAD — OH YES — WHAT AGE PICKIES
WELL I'LL BE DOGGERED —
SO THAT'S WHY I'VE BEEN SITTING AROUND WITH ONLY MYSELF FOR COMPANY!
LISTEN S S — YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME YOU'RE A NURSE. YOU OUGHT TO KNOW HOW I CAN GET AFTER THESE OLD PIMPLES
WHY PAUL I DON'T REALIZE THEY WERE SO BAD. FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST IS WHAT YOU NEED. EAT 3 FAITHFULLY AND I'M SURE YOUR SKIN WILL CLEAR UP
GEE BUT PAUL SURE S ALL THE RAGE AROUND HERE THESE DAYS
HE LOOKS TOTALLY A DIFFERENT YOUNG BOY SINCE HE GOT RID OF THOSE UGLY PICKIES
FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST
—clears the skin
by clearing skin irritants out of the blood
Don't let Adolescent Pimples put a stop to YOUR good times
YOUNG PEOPLE are often plagued by unsightly pimples after the start of adolescence—from about 13 to 25, or longer.
Important glands develop at this time, and final growth takes place causing disturbances in the body. The skin gets oversensitive. Waste poisons in the blood irritate this sensitive skin —and pimples break out!
Fleischmann's fresh Yeast clears these skin irritants out of the blood. Then, the pimples go. Eat 3 cakes daily —one about ½ hour before meals —plain, or dissolved in a little water—until your skin clears. Start today!
Copyright, 1936, Standard Brands Incorporated

1936

Fig. 9 34

A34

A35

and is sold back to us, to recreate ourselves. It is implied that we can recreate a unity with our appropriated image: our face is always Other in the mirror, yet is ours, so why should not these faces become 'ours'?

A34: The face as part of a collection. 'The Coty collection of great faces' shows that it is *owned* by someone else. It is given the status of a work of art: in other words an object. It becomes a thing, to be classed with others of its kind, not linked with a person or a body.

A35: As in A34, the face is seen here as an art object. The photograph is textured to resemble an oil painting. But here, the object-like nature of the whole face means that bits of it becomes objects, too: 'the hand-painted mouth'.

A36: Here, the eyes have become the particularly created part of the face. A crucial word here is 'creates'. Revlon creates *your* face – which simply becomes 'the' face, any face. It is a product; Revlon actually creates only the make-up but make-up is equated with face. The eyes are the emphasised part; it is *the* face with *the* fabulous eyes. The '*the*' here particularly stresses the thingness of the face; the three small pictures show that the face is indeed mass-produced. In these little pictures the eyeshadow is shown in different colours but the face around it remains identical. This shows that it is merely a dummy, a *thing* for the eye colour to work on. Note also that the Fabulous Eyes here do *not* look into yours: they look just past you. Here, the Face and the Eyes are at their most detached, most object-like, not even linked to us by a meeting gaze.

A36

Fig. 10

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38. Freedman, Beauty Bound, p. 63.

39. Freedman, Beauty Bound, p. 63.

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50. Banner, pp. 213-14.

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52. Banner, p. 202.

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54. Rothman, Proper Place, p. 22.

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